REWRITE The Magazine of Effective Writing

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THERE IS A TECHNIQUE TO LEARNING

Many writers have never given much time to thinking about the problem of making better writers out of themselves. They just try to write. Or they thumb through a writers' magazine and point to the first expensive mail-order "course" and expect to learn in thirteen easy lessons. The present craze of being quizzed is a tip-off on the whole fallacy behind a lot of adult education. If only the textbook has a quiz, at the end of a chapter, then somehow the information everyone seeks will be mysteriously pumped into & impregnated in one's brain. And immediately a bankclerk can become a writer, a garbage-collector can become an expert [illegible]ist. "You, too, can enchant your neighbor on the xylophone."

Much has been written upon the theme that the way to write is to—write. A lot of the writers who have managed to sell, attempt a face-saving but false sense of security, by wise-cracking in front of a gaping writers' club along this line. "Never took a lesson in my life. Just sat down and wrote." What about risking your life in an auto made that way? Or how about flying in a big transport plane pilotted by a man who never took a lesson in his life?

Sure, anyone can learn that way; can take an automotive engine apart and struggle for hours to put it together again. But time is an element, and it does save time to study. More than anything else to think intellectually about a problem; to view it in relation with all the other complex and intricate ideas involved in practical, realistic living in a scientific world. That's why questions at the end of every chapter by themselves alone won't help you to become an Author. It is necessary for you to absorb the facts or the emotional experience of being familiar, let's say, with the job you want to learn.

To learn to write, as to learn to do anything, you have to alternate between theory and practice. You get a rough idea, think a bit about it, then try to execute it, & for the final step in the cycle, go back to examine what you have accomplished. A writer is very wise to alternate periods of active writing with reading and thinking upon this profession he has assumed. Christ went into the mountains to meditate. Surely you ought to think about what it is you are trying to do, and how is the best way to do it.

Elva and I have a lot of bull sessions in our spare moments. She will ask me to check on a ms. or problem for her. We begin to do a little theorizing on life and writing and technique. The other day one of our REWRITE subscribers dropped in in the midst of such a session. The moment our friend was out of sight we picked up the ideas again, tossed, twisted and turned them inside out. It was almost wholly speculation, but it was fun & it sent us both back to our jobs stimulated and strengthened. We find that it is a great experience explaining new things, sights or sounds to Billy. And in his little boy way, he gives as much as he takes and absorbs.

That is why college life, and the intense, creative turmoil of a writers' conference is such a golden opportunity. You can't settle everything, or learn everything about writing. But you meet other minds, exchange the ideas that seem important to you at the moment. Going home, you think about all of the ideas you mixed with and find you discard a few of your theories and accept others. In a relatively short time you get a new "perspective" on life, and all unnoticed you'll discover this continues to grow during your winter months. Thus you shape and build the personality, the inner soul that is you.

A writer is a good deal like a pitcher. It can't be poured from until it has been filled. But conversely, you cannot always either fill it or empty it. You must alternate. A writer is the same way. He fills himself up, then he pours out. Every novelist will know the truth of this experience. There is terrific let-down when you have finished a ms. You think you will never write another book in all the rest of your life. But gradually the reservoir begins to fill itself, & suddenly one day you know that you have got to do another book.

To switch to another image, a writer is also like a sponge. You dip him in the water, and he soaks up quantities of the wet liquid automatically. But here's a point: you lift him out of the water and much drains off in cascading streams. That is true of the writer when he is soaking up technique or background material. In "The Story of Ernie Pyle" there are memorable accounts of how he listened and observed with his very muscles, it seemed. Shy, withdrawn, he flitted across a scene, took what he needed, and wrote a magnificent column. The unessential dripped off.

You can't expect to put everything in the story, or learn everything you need in that one time you decide to study. Writing is always a lifetime job. You cease learning the day you knock at St. Peter's gate. You have to do the best you can at the time you have a story to write, and do it with what you've got in the way of materials and skills. And another thing: you need to learn that it is fatal to try to be at both extremes of your alternation at the same time. There's a time for study and there is a time for writing. A writer therefore, is foolish if he attempts to do both. He will only work himself into a nervous state. When you write, write. Forget about technique. Remember the sponge. It holds some of the water it soaks up. Will you.

REWRITE

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MAKE William E. Harris, WE MUST
THE U.N. Elva May Harris, PRACTICE
STRONG! Editors. OUR FAITH!

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URGE YOUR FRIENDS to SUBSCRIBE. REWRITE—is the ONLY writers' magazine which accepts no advertising. It can tell you the truth, and protect your interests. It fights for you & its CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE is the most authoritative and accurate available. Soon it will be the largest, too. No other book offers you such accurate reportage on so individual and personally helpful a basis. Support your best friend and ally. Tell others

BEATING BACK COMMUNISM IS NOT ENOUGH

There can be no mistaking now the motives and the ambitions of the Soviet imperialist dictatorship. Secretary Dean Acheson is correct that the free world cannot do business with the Politburo. But we must do business with the Russian people. We must never stop with the freeing of Korea. We must show the Kremlin in unforgettable language that desiring peace, we will never again stand for the negative bickering, bullying and under-cover prostitution of world order which it habitually employs.

But re-arming the free world, standing by in patient indecision while we wait for the Russian dictatorship to crack up and fall-part, is not enough. We must carry the torch of our positive, creative and dynamic faith to the hopeful peoples behind the Iron Curtain, in under-privileged countries, and to those in the free world, who are waiting to see the color of our eyes and character. We must be strong in heart and mind as well as muscle. We must be unselfish. We must share our Constitution and Bill of Rights with all the peoples of this earth. Most of all, and this is the very core of all our hopes, our dreams for a world of peace and prosperity, to live our ideals not only with our lips but in our daily lives. We must be democratic as well as merely talk about it. We must intensively work for an extension of improved social goals everywhere, not just for those who own the right stocks, vote the right way or are members (often by coercion) of the right union. What is not good enough for the folk in the ritzy suburbs, must not be all right for those living on the wrong side of a big city, or across the tracks. What is not right for the white man, must not be passable for men with dark skins or black or yellow. We in America when we go into foreign nations, to help them work for peace and better living, must not take up with the socially decadent and ruthlessly reactionary. To be liberal and progressive, to press for reforms, that are long over-due, is not necessarily, or inevitably to be politically immature or corrupt.

All of these things will take time and experimentation. But both from within & without Americans can and should stand up and be counted on the side we proclaim so loudly—and often so emptily—once each year now on the Fourth of July. Folk in other countries will willingly forgive us our mistakes, if we show unmistakably that our hearts and minds are in the right place. Sincerity, Character and an enthusiasm for the good & Christian way of life are a powerful antidote for the mistakes we all must make inevitably if we are ordinarily and humanly fallible.

Americans can do no more effective action, I assure you, than to (1) help strengthen by voluntary means the UNITED NATIONS, and (2) advance the Point Four Program by private as well as public subscription of money & manpower. The contrast of America refusing repeatedly to exercise its veto, while Russians shamelessly fit their attendance to suit only their own selfish and domineering plans, is not lost on the world at large. Whenever we share our experts and know-how with other countries, whenever we clean up disease, or send our students and teachers and writers to other countries in exchange for some from theirs, we are making lasting friends, who some day will stand us in good stead.

It is good for writers to understand what an important influence they are in the battle for a better world in which they can enjoy more freedom to think and feel and be. A writer or editor who helps to export "crime dramas", or otherwise helps to perpetrate a false and depraved impression of the United States overseas, is just as much a traitor, as any immature and politically naive fool, who, like the Tokio Roses, sucks a microphone for the enemy. Contrariwise, any writer who reports the American scene honestly & ably, helps both Americans and folk from the other countries beyond our borders to appreciate our good points and to understand our national and individual ambitions. The character of a people is often recorded in whatever literature it produces.

In the final analysis, however, every nation, like every writer, must work for its own destiny; it must have praiseworthy goals to long endure. As we writers help to formulate and raise these, we serve our country best.

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POETS' WORKSHOP

Will the meeting please come to order. It is the first meeting of the Poets' Workshop since Julia Hull Winner started a fire with the spark of her poem that had been commented upon by a number of poets and critics in the poetry sessions and cafeteria talk sessions at Durham a year ago. The first ms. is one that has been sent in anonymously for a "criticism" by you and me. Here it is:

DOWN THROUGH THE LINE

Sing a song of soapsuds,
Of bleach and whitening rain,
A swishing song of washing
And scrubbing out the stain,
For I'm a drudge with diapers
Hanging on my line.

Sing a song of first grade!
Oh, where's my baby gone?
When you're six and twenty-six
Parting isn't fun.
I wish that I had diapers
Flapping on my line.

Sing a song of spring brides,
My daughter will be one.
And ring the joyful bells at last!
Oh! Pleasure that is mine!
In time there may be diapers
Drying on her line!

What's good about the poem? It has an interesting rhyme-scheme: rain-stain-line; gone-fun-line; one-mine-line. There is only one rhyme in the whole poem. The poet starts with it in true form: rain-stain. Then she varies it with the word "line". She varies it still further in the second stanza with the vowel change in "gone-fun", coming back to the refrain word "line". In the last stanza, however, the "one" is a true rhyme with "fun", in stanza two. "Mine" is a true rhyme, too, with the final "line". It's rather neat the way the poet starts off with a true rhyme in a long vowel sound, shifts in the middle to short vowel sounds and ends up again with a different set of long vowel sounds. Doing this gives strength to the beginning and end of the poem, while the variation in the middle is instrumental in avoiding monotony.

The first stanza suggests the sound of some one doing a little washing by hand. The onomatopoetic quality adds to the imagery. The refrain is handled very capably and has just enough variation to keep it interesting without losing the value of the repetition.

The meter is suggestive of the words of the poem though perhaps not always the mood. The poet says, "Sing a song" and she makes it do just that, sing all the way through the first five lines to the refrain. Then she repeats the pattern exactly a second and third time always ending with the refrain. The meter is regular and steady, and after reading the first stanza, we know the tune, so to speak, and can readily join in with the singing.

But what is wrong with the poem? The author tells me it has gone out to four different slick magazines. Any of us could tell her that she gave up too soon. Many a poem finds its home after it has made more than four or five trips. But I think she is right in her feeling that the poem hasn't quite reached, shall we say, its final stage.

I would suggest a change in the third line of the second stanza. "When you're six and twenty-six" is confusing. It could easily be taken to mean that the poet is thirty-two.. But what she means to say is that she is 26 and her baby is six. Changing the line so it will read, "When two are six and twenty-six" would solve that problem.

The basic trouble, it seems to me, is that this poems falls on middle ground between 2 different, effective kinds of poems. It is either not obvious enough or it isn't subtle enough. Suppose the poet intended it to be—just what it purports to be on the surface, that is, a woman grumbling over the amount of work that is required to care for a baby, & then wishing she had the work back, and the baby, too, when the child reaches school age, and finally being overjoyed at the prospect of having a grandchild to love and dandle.. In that case the poet ought to draw out the opposites more obviously. The first stanza, of course, should suggest in rhythm and form the drudgery of the work. The second should suggest the sadness of the parting. And the third the marked contrast of the anticipated happiness.

On the other hand, the poet may have had in mind a much deeper thing in writing this poem. She may have been trying to portray the picture of a mother who deep down inside was as happy as could be, but on the surface was complaining about the drudgery of baby care. In the second stanza perhaps she was talking about the very definite change in relationship that occurs when the child first goes to school. The baby has gone out of the tiny intimate circle mother and baby have been inhabiting together from the child's birth. The baby goes into the world. Some of her need of her mother is gone. The relationship changes sharply at this point.

But with marriage and motherhood of her—daughter, a mother regains some of what was lost through the school years. They have vital things in common now. The relationship closes up again. There is another tight little circle similar to the one they lived together in when the daughter was a tiny needful infant. If this is what the poet intended, she has not quite done it. The poem that lies hidden under the surface of the words, is too deeply hidden.

REWRITE

The first stanza is a good start. The gay rhythm belies what the words say. You know that the young mother is as happy as can be with the big thing in her life, and that her grumbling about drudgery is only a superficial thing.

Perhaps the solution to this second piece of verse lies in the solution to the first. It is conceivable that the poem could imply one idea on the surface and something deeper underneath. That is the kind of poem you get an extra kick out of. It is really, you see, two poems in one. It's like the ancient Greek myths. Remember the story about Odysseus and Circe? When I read it as a child, I took in only its literal meaning. I pictured the men being turned into pigs and running around in a pen oink-oinking. It was a good story that way, but how much better if the mature reader can see that Homer drew a symbolic picture of men whose hungry desires and passions were running away with them. He was expressing the mental in terms of physical and visual pictures.

Now, let's hear the members of the Poets' Workshop. Anyone who reads this page is considered a member. What are your comments on this poem? The author wants to hear most of all what's wrong with it. But don't forget, please, what a lift any writer can get from an honest compliment, or a constructive suggestion. And as you help someone else you're helping yourself, because you are teaching, in a very real sense, yourself. You are becoming aware of the ideas that are lying latent in your mind, but which do not actually serve you until you think about them and pin them down. Make them a conscious or instinctive part of your technical equipment.

We will print your comments, with or without your name, according to your wishes and as seems most suitable. We will do this, of course, in the next session of the Workshop which will occur in a few months.

Here is the second poem for consideration in the Poets' Workshop. Please join in with this discussion group. It is the way to get a number of different opinions and help each other.

THE SOAPSUD PEOPLE

The soapsud people in the tub
Are fond of swimming. When I take
My bath, they ride the waves I make.
I catch them in my hands and rub
Them on my knees. They only stop
A moment. Then they quickly glide
Back down my two-leg mountain side,
And dive into the sea——kerplop!

Send in your comments and constructive ideas and criticisms.

BOOKS FOR POETS

SAID IN SONNETS. Preston H. Williams. Banner Press. $3.00. Second book of poems by one of the WCS Family. An attractively printed, interestingly arranged volume of 120 sonnets on a wide variety of subjects and personages. The author is inclined on occasion to mistake literal statement for homely detail. But his enthusiasm for poetic expression is attested by the number of verses and ideas herein treated.

FROM WITCHTROT TO TATNIC. Loring E. Williams American Weave Press. $ .50. An apt title, it refers to the names of Maine towns in ancient Berwick, will take you back in memory to any small New England town you have ever in happy fortune visited. Attractively printed and bound in blue paper cover, this collection of 19 poems, all thoughtful, well written poems about country living, and country people will make an excellent gift. There's solid substance and quiet tranquility, even in such exciting, ably observed tragedy for example, as "Fire in the Afternoon". You'll find the same poetic discrimination and distinction in these poems by the editor himself as mark the pages of his poetry magazine, AMERICAN WEAVE. For he is a poet.

MARK AND INWARDLY DIGEST

The July 30th bulletin from Anonyme Workshop modestly marked, "not for publicity", contains the July section and several charming poems by the late John Richard Moreland, and others. It also carries a thought which all writers should memorize.

"The amateur produces from the standpoint of what he considers a good idea for a poem. The professional selects first the publication he wants to hit. Then he fixes upon an idea which he thinks would be desired by the editor of that book. He studies his market, thoroughly, learns its special taboos, its preferred forms and lengths, its favored themes and their treatment. Then only he starts to write.

"Write what your editor wants, as he desires it written—and you will sell. This is not to prostitute your art—unless, of course, you select an inferior market."

While Elva and I do not agree that a writer must always select a magazine before he begins to write, it is nevertheless true that this is roughly the process every writer inevitably experiences every time he achieves a sale. No one hits a target by shutting his eyes and pulling the trigger. That is a one in-a-million kind of hit that everyone gets occasionally, but receives no joy from making. The other is the result of intelligent and artistic use of the best material imagination is capable of summoning up. And everyone enjoys winning a prize he honestly & sincerely knows that he deserves.

This kind of precision shooting saves the nerves and lots of time. Your morale & your standards of work will be better. Try it.

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Here are the sales reported to us in this past month:

Mary Elsnau
Article: HOROSCOPE, TODAY'S HEALTH.

Virginia Sievert
Poems: OUR LITTLE FRIEND.
Article: The Same.

Hazel May Wynn
Story: CHILDREN'S FRIEND (August). Also several other sales and club prizes.

Evangeline Austin
Play: The INSTRUCTOR.

Ber Temple
Article: CAL; Fillers: Boston POST.

Carrie Esther Hammil
Poems, WESTMINSTER, VISION, LIFE TODAY.
Article: JUDGE NEWS, VISION.

Charlotte Norlin
News Correspondence: High Plains JOURNAL (Dodge City, Ks.). Capper's FARMER.

Rachel Day
Article (Series): FORWARD.
Articles: CANADIAN GIRL.

Violet Wallin (England)
Story: MODERN WOMAN

Carrie Esther Hammil (More)
Articles: CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES.

Winona Nichols
Article: The CHRISTIAN HOME (Meth. Pub. House, Nashville, Tenn.)

Edward W. Ludwig
Articles: DAILY MEDITATIONS, CONQUEST & FRIENDS.

Helen S. Neal
Articles: AMERICAN HOME, WAR CRY, TODAYS FAMILY HERALD & WEEKLY STAR, Nat. Catholic Welfare Conference.

A ROUND ROBIN AND A FEW MARKETS

Charles A. Cuneo, 16 Bow St., Medford 55, Mass., and Charlotte Norlin, McCracken, Ks., are co-leaders of a Round Robin that is interested in adding a few new members. Anyone interested should write in to one of these.

SOUTHERN PLANTER, Paul D. Sander, Richmond, Va., is possibly a market for 3,000——4,000 word stories similar to those used by Capper's FARMER, suggests R.H.Ricketts, one of our newsstand readers. We have written the editor for further details.

American Junior Red Cross JOURNAL & NEWS: overstocked for several months.

HUNTING & FISHING no longer uses verse.

AN AGENT CAN DO IT FOR YOU?

Here is a common fallacy in the thinking, as regards selling, of many young, or inexperienced writers. It reached us in a letter from a good friend of ours. We had tactfully advised her that she was not yet ready for an agent. She replied that she quite agreed with us, and had the name of a reputable agent in NYC, given her by friends who work with the agent. The remainder of the reply is illuminating:

"I wouldn't dream of contacting her (this agent) yet with the stuff I have done so far. The reason I sent the —— adv. to you is that I feel that several stories of mine perhaps could hit little markets. But I haven't time to study the publications. A beginner's agent could do it for me."

There is the dream that lies curled up in the hearts of millions of ambitious, but inexperienced writers' hearts. Elva and I are well acquainted with this woman's background and we know that she has a time-consuming & devitalizing job, that really does not permit her the time to dig for markets. But as the old saying has it, the road to Hell "is paved with good intentions". Similarly, the fact that you cannot spare the time to find markets for your wares, does not relieve you of the responsibility under such conditions.

The reason for this is plain economics. A sale to a "small magazine," or newspaper, is likely to net you anywhere from $2 to $50 & 10% commission on those figures is 20¢ & $5, respectively. It is obvious that no one who is worth hiring, is going to send out a ms. possibly six or seven times for such a paltry reward. He just would not eat. No, critic-agents, the "beginner's agent" are not interested in your small sales, except as the sideline to something bigger.

Some critic-agents are honestly trying to build themselves up as agents. Every agent has to begin somewhere, and while most reputable agents start with a stable of a dozen or so selling writers, it is possible to begin practically at scratch. This sort of agent sends out the best stuff he can obtain and hopes some of it will stick. We call an agent of this kind a "10% boy". But whether he's a good guy or one on the make you will have to find out through time and experience. In either case you will discover he supplements his income in some other way.

That opens the door to possible racketing of some kind. Either he is just an amateur, as a critic, in which case you don't get the real value for your money, when you patronize his side-line, or he is apt to sell you a "package" in the form of a course or some other mail-order writers' "aid". Such sidelines should make you prick up your ears. No successful agent needs such side-lines. So, there really is no substitute for just digging for markets until you are able to command a competent professional agent.

MARKET NEWS ALONG THE WAY

North American Student Cooperative League, 1614 Kentucky St., Lawrence, Kansas, we are informed, has a list of job openings in the cooperative field for campus co-op members. Some of these are in the field of journalism. A non-college person can often make a place for himself in this field, if he is willing to work. And there is no better employer to work for than an organization you own shares in. Tell your young friends to apply at the above address.

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The Consumers' Coop. Assoc., 343 So Dearborn St., Chicago 4, Ill., has recently created the A.J.Cummins Memorial library. It's a source of information about cooperatives.

THIS DAY, Rev. Henry Rische, 3558 S.Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo., is expanding according to an announcement in the August, and 12th issue of Volume 1. September, it's stated, will carry 16 more pages (48 now) & will include: monthly full-length story, an extra article of home interest, cartoon story, bigger Homemaker's Section, and page of juvenile material. It already carries a storiette each month, a poem and several articles, & a picture story. It spends a large amount on art work, and will spend more on its authors, we are informed, as its budget increases.(That would be a good investment!)

KALEIDOGRAPH, Whitney & Vaida Montgomery, 624 No. Vernon Ave., Dallas 8, Texas, is one of the older poetry magazines. Prizes: $25, for the best poem published in each quarter of the year, and $1 each month in a variety of classifications. The magazine is an open market, except that the $1 prizes are given in subscriptions, if the winner is not a subscriber. A yearly book publication award is also given; this year's winner announced in the August issue. Gileen Douglas, Canadian, and a member of the WCS Family, won the 1st quarter prize for 1950.

N.Y.Field Office, REORIENTATION BRANCH of the Dept. of the Army, 139 Centre St., NYC 13, is interested in receiving large or small donations of books about American literature for distribution to universities, colleges, and schools in Japan, where there is a great need for such books. This is one way to combat Communism.

Books are now being sold by vending units in New York City. If successful, the method of selling 25¢ books may be extended.

The FIELD AFAR, John J. Considine, Maryknoll, N. Y., pays $5 for each picture that it accepts, on publication. Low pay for the prose. It is a house organ for the missioner training school.

YOU, Newton Lewis, Unity School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Mo. is the new name, that PROGRESS will assume (November). It is for 13—18 year old boys & girls. Character building, Information, Inspiration. Lengths articles: 500—1,500 words. Stories & interviews: 1,500—3,500. Poems vary. Payment on Acceptance.

IT'S YOUR FUTURE. MAKE IT—GOOD!

Early in August we began to get the first news releases from book publishers of higher book prices. Magazine prices will be going up soon, too. Everything, in fact, typewriter ribbons, paper, printing (and none of these—had come down much from the last war inflation!) And especially taxes. Cheapened money and possible war jobs will take a bit of the "pain" out, so you won't squawk very hard against the politicians of both parties. Eventually, it may mean another war boom in reading, if rationing of television sets and automobiles develops. In the meantime there will be plenty of uncertainty and difficulties in meeting deed-lines for editors. So, expect reduced or overstocked markets.

Don't forget! Every dollar of waste & extravagance in government high or low, every dollar added to the Public Debt, comes from your pocket and the pockets of editors whom you expect to pay you money for your mss... Think about that as you go to the polls, or decide to stay home because it is "too much trouble". Make your vote count this year, & keep telling your representatives all up and down the line just what you think of them.It will do them and you good!

MAN TO MAN, W.W.Scott, 105 E. 35th St.,NYC 16, has become a monthly, so market has now doubled. Masculine slant and fiction not over 3,000 words.

A REWRITE subscriber recently told us he'd received an assignment to do a serial for a small magazine (Sunday School paper). It is his second serial for this market. He credited REWRITE for the tip that made these two sales possible. As he says: a $60 return on a $2 investment is not bad. (That is, to be sure, only one tip in a whole year. Some of our Gang hit the jackpot a number of times. We are now reporting on a minimum in excess of 600 ms. markets annually. And with an improved CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE the number is rising sharply. With the active support and help of writers everywhere, this number can be doubled. It will be. And we know our market tips are generally the most accurate available, because practically 100% are based directly upon editorial pronouncements.)

The National Writers' Club, 1819 GilpinSt. Denver 3, Colo, has issued for its members a very thorough and helpful advisory reporton "The Inside Facts of Writing". The sort of straight shooting about agents, critics, and mail-order courses that REWRITE has offered writers for ten years. It is priced at 15¢, and non-members may be able to obtain copies if they write in as above.

RENEW your subscriptions PROMPTLY, Please.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Wilfred Funk, Inc., 381 4th Ave., NYC. A new address for this publisher of non-fiction books along the popular education & inspirational line for trade and mail-order sale. A new editor is to be announced shortly.

YOUR LIFE, Douglas Burton, 227 East 44thSt, NYC 17, and the string of 6 other magazines will remain at the old address. These items taken together, represent an expansion, and separation of the book and magazine departments of the joint firm. It is nice to have a writers' market making progress this way.

Elva had a poem in the August WEE WISDOM.

YOUTH'S COMRADE, Helen Temple, 2923 Troost Ave., Box 527, Kansas City 10, Mo. This is a change of editors, Miss Temple having replaced Mrs. Davidson as of Aug. 15th.

F. J. Kenedy & Sons, 12 Barclay St., NYC 8. Joseph A. Duffy, gen. manager of Christopher Prize Contests, became publishing director of this Catholic publishing house on Aug. 1st.

Christopher Prize Contests, Donald Demarest, 18 East 48th St., NYC 17, is the set-up here now. Fr. Keller of course remains as the spiritual director, with Mr. Demarest managing the details of the monthly, and dramatic and book prize awards.

Viola Irene Cooper, NYC literary agent, is seriously ill and her agency is being closed down, we are informed by Miss Emilie Gerber, her Boston representative.

MOVEMENT apparently ran into financial difficulties and has suspended.

REWRITE went to press early this month (At least we hope (on Aug. 5th) it did!) Because Bill and Elva planned to be at Durham by the 13th to start reading short story mss. Incidentally, this gives you some idea of how editors have to live continually in 3 months simultaneously, and a kind of never-neverexistence that, like daylight saving time, is always a month, two months or even 6 months ahead of their readers' "time". When you're all excited about the contents of the October issue, they are out front planning January, and at the same time getting November or December to "bed". Think of that when you write into them about their magazines or the ms. you want to sell! It will make them like you better.

OUTDOORSMAN, Jim Mitchell, 814 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill., reported to one our WCS Minute Men recently that it is "overstocked on short articles and other fillers at the present time".

Billy Gee's godfather, "Uncle" Bob Shaw, a week-end visitor from the Harvard University Summer School. Result: some good talk.

BUILD FROM A LOWER TO A HIGHER LEVEL

It's funny what a difference the dramatic placing of material makes in a story. Put it in one place and it will distort or destroy the flow of the single line of interest. But put it in the right position and it punches home the single effect and makes the latter more memorable. It is just a matter of knowing what you wish to do, and then doing it, skilfully and persuasively. And thinking it through for logical dramatic values.

Elva, our friend, Bob Shaw, and I read an example of this together recently. It was a variation of the perfect crime pattern. MC had to out-think the villain. He started to and then tried for a physical K.O. The other way around was the logical, obvious order.

University of Michigan and Station WWJ-TV have announced a fall educational course by television on Sunday afternoons. A one hour program will be divided 3 ways: academic, research laboratories and other similar "visits", and "modern living". It sounds like a popularized adult education program, but it is a promising start. Writers should keep a sharp look-out for further opportunities of this kind. You could learn and—contribute!

The AUTHOR & JOURNALIST reports that it's overstocked until "late fall".

Mrs. Blanche E. Keysner, WCS member is the president of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. She states there will be some small prizes, cash ($) in different classifications. We've offered to stand by and help any way we can.

PAPER CLIPS! GOSH DARN (BLESS) THEM!

The matter of paper clips is always being raised. And by implication the much more reprehensible staple. A correspondent says she has gained the impression that there must be editors who don't like to see either. She's probably right. I myself usually detach the darn clips when I am reading a ms. I prefer a ms. that is neatly creased twice across because the creases hold it together and so I slide the top page off and slide it back on the bottom. Thus, when I finish, the top has returned to its rightful place and the rest of the pages are in their proper places. The danger of misleid pages is reduced to a minminimum. But I am very careful to replace a clip when I have finished. And I detest the protective layers of tissue paper, blotting paper and other unmentionable forms of protection for the ms. A good old fashioned or even slightly rusty clip mark on the ms. is not a fatal injury that makes me wish to reject the ms. immediately. I am much more inclined to rub ashes and bubble gum on it if the margins are so narrow that the typing is way up under the clip, if I decide to maintain the clip in the far lefthand corner or right, if some authors place it there. And they do! But staples! that prevents me, and editors from working on the ms. Grr! #$%"&!

HERE IS PROGRESS IN BETTER LIVING

The idea that Bill suggested to the prisoners in the U.S.Penitentiary, McNeil Island, Wash., has been given a name, Post-Release Assistance. The Inter-Relations Committee, the Inmates' council, similar to the undergraduate council in most colleges, has made real progress in laying the ground-work for a revolving fund, that will supplement the very small hand-out given prisoners on discharge at the end of their term. This fund will be established by contributions from the prisoners and any donations that may be made by interested folk on the outside. Money which is returned by men who have been paroled, is to be used to help other prisoners as their opportunity to start life over begins.

It was the success of our own WCS Scholarship Fund, that led Bill to offer a suggestion, when he noticed editor F. J. Allmen's very able presentation and discussion of the problem in the ISLAND LANTERN. The WCS Fund over a period of years has helped writers by making REWRITE and WCS help available. Many shut-in and handicapped writers have had an opportunity to get practical assistance they could not otherwise have afforded. The Fund was started by a gift, and writer friends, and the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB have enlarged it. But the real success of the Fund has grown out of the repayment by many of the beneficiaries of the help they've received, often at considerable personal sacrifice. Thus, they share the responsibility and pleasure of helping other writers having a greater handicap than their own.

The men at McNeil hope to acquire the same dividends of self-respect by forming a cooperative plan for helping each other to rehabilitate themselves in the outside world. It could be a revolutionary development in the field of improved penology. Very sensibly the men who are working out a plan, are taking the idea seriously and are trying to eliminate as many of the "bugs" as possible before actually putting the plan into operation with the consent and help of the Bureau of Prisons. We hope that they manage to get off to a flying start, for it should mean a good deal to several promising writers serving terms in this penitentiary. And if the idea originally offered by us, helps a group of men to rehabilitate themselves we feel we have done a good job of teaching.

GAGGING AND GAGGING

A reader of *WORD STUDY* inquires as to the origin of gag in the modern sense of comic remarks or business. Originally, as Hamlet's famous speech to the Players would seem to indicate, "gagging one's lines" meant making an interpolation, usually intended to be funny. Hamlet enjoins, "Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them." Thus a gag began as an interpolation, supposedly impromptu; almost always the gag was comic business. The semantic evolution is clear. In time a gag came to mean comic business, supposedly impromptu. Our present-day comics casually speak their carefully rehearsed insults as if they had just thought of them. The only other explanation that has ever been given goes back to a still earlier meaning of gag — to retch or choke. A gag that's funny enough causes one to choke with laughter. Gag here is onomatopoetic.

Reprinted from WORD STUDY published by G.&C.Merriam Co.

AN EDITOR'S ANALYSIS IN THE S-F FIELD

OTHER WORLDS, Beatrice Mahaffey, Clark Publishing Co., 1144 No. Ashland Ave. Evanston, Ill., has been sending a rejection slip that not only carries a check chart of 20 reasons why mss. are rejected, but also an extensive report to writers on the state of its market. An unusually good piece of promotion material to improve writer-editor relations. It's a wonder more editors do not do likewise.

Miss Mahaffy comments that because "OTHER WORLDS is still a bi-monthly our market has not yet grown as large as we expect it to become." She regrets she has to reject a larger proportion of material than she'd like to.

Offering specific tips, she says: "We receive too many mss. about creatures too far from the human scale to be sympathetic; too many plotless travelogues through space, or philosophical expositions in story form; fantasy in which bug-eyed monsters profane lovely girls; the world wrecking menace and invaders from space; the atmospheric story, a very difficult type to put across.

"We do want 'off-trail' stories, an extensive variety, including the types that make several other science fiction books (she offers specific titles) popular with specialized groups of readers. ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, for instance, is noted for its daring, yet logical development of scientific-fact themes...We do not want any 'pattern'or fixed policy to harden, except that of accepting the best stories writers can produce."

WE WILL ALWAYS GO TO BAT FOR YOU

We have had a rather angry, but justified protest from a writer regarding editors who keep a ms. for three months or more, only to reject it without a word of comment. Often a ms. has some timely value. At least there is time value for the author. He has only a certain number of years to write and sell a modest number of mss. If editors tie him up unnecessarily, he cannot get the good out of work during his working life.

In this connection we suggest that a wise idea would be to mark on the envelop and on the ms. (p. 1, upper right hand corner, capital letters) the phrase, "TIME VALUE". The difficulty is that probably every darn fool amateur will then mark all of his worthless mss. with that phrase and the editor can no longer give careful service to mss. that are perishable. It is worth trying, however. Of course another way to achieve the same result is to write a brief letter, telling the editor you think you have a timely idea, & so would value his serious consideration, but if it is obviously off the campus for him, you would appreciate a reasonably prompt rejection. Most editors are decent about that.

I wish writers would tell us about delinquent editors. Give us an objective report.

AN EXCELLENT BOOK

ON THE ART OF WRITING. Sir Arthur Quiller Couch. G.P.Putnam's Sons, $3.00. Just as we went to press news came of the reprint of a truly great book on writing that has been O. P. for many years. It has been termed quite accurately a classic by critics and writers who have had access to it. A WRITERS' BOOK Club Selection.

Ethel M. Eaton says that she finds weekly rural newspapers and the agricultural trade publications, such as those published by the big supply houses, an excellent source of a lot of good stories. You see, they write about people and better ways to farm. Cover a great many allied or sideline subjects. A smart writer can easily cook up one of these 3 or 4-line news stories, or practical how-to-do fillers into a real rural feature. I myself have seen items easily combinable.

Although we do not believe that a free lance writer without a reputation has a chance to make the grade in the average Television set-up, we do think that Paul S. Nathan's discussion of subsidiary rights is interesting and important. And so, we have reprinted it, with thanks to Mr. Nathan and the Publishers' weekly.

SOME POETRY MARKETS

The WESTMINSTER Magazine, Thornwell Jacobs, Sta. C., Box 142, Atlanta, Ga., is an all-poetry publication. "Its only requirement is that a poem should be good poetry and its hope is that it should be short. We offer liberal prizes, awarded by the votes of contributors and subscribers. Otherwise, no payment.

AMERICAN WEAVE, Loring E. Williams, 1559 East 115th St., Cleveland 6, Ohio. One of the most discriminating markets. Pays $1 minimum, except on very short poems. Also prizes and a free brochure published each year as an annual award.

The LYRIC, Virginia Cummins, 969 5th Ave., NYC 21, uses traditional, not free, verse. Pays approximately 50¢ per line, and gives a $1,000 award each year.

POETRY NEW YORK, 14 Ave. A, NYC 9. Experimental poetry and articles about same. No pay.

New York TIMES, Times Bldg. NYC.. A single poem on the Editorial page each day. Pays well.

VARIEGATION, Grover Jacoby, Room 549, 124 W. 4th St., Los Angeles 13. A free verse quarterly. Pays 20¢ per line. Also: $2.50 for 150-word "poem reviews" of single poems.

HELP US TO BE ACCURATE!

Imitation is the sincerest flattery, it is said. Two writers' magazines having watched our CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE expand, are now selling on their readers to contribute data in the manner of our WCS Minute Men. We are happy that they will thus make available an additional amount of information about markets. It is good to see writers work together.

We would like to point out, however, that the CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE is the product of many minds, and is closely checked with the editors for accuracy. And this has to be repeated at frequent intervals. We urge a welcome cooperation from writers. But we ask a writer to support his contributions with actual documentary evidence. Never merely angry or disgruntled feelings & opinions. We balance these against other, happier ones.

Books into FILMS

BY PAUL S. NATHAN

AS you might expect, the growth of television has enormously complicated the already complicated business of subsidiary—particularly movie—rights. Nowadays when a contract is drawn up for the sale of a book to pictures, there is likely to be as much haggling over TV provisions as over price.

While the picture companies naturally want to say when, and to what extent, the material they are buying may be used by the upstart medium, the authors feel that in the long run television may be as important to them as the screen; and encouraged by their agents, they are seeking to retain as much control in this area as possible. There are other ramifications, too, of what is essentially a bitter basic conflict.

FIRST of all, a couple of facts about television rights apart from their connection with screen rights. NBC has a standard contract providing that after six weeks all rights in a television script revert to the author. On the other hand, CBS retains the rights, for keeps, to any play it telecasts. An author who had written half a dozen video dramas or comedies for NBC might enjoy a small but steady income for a number of years as a result of repeat performances—but no such luck if he trafficked originally with CBS.

In conjunction with a producing outfit called World Video, CBS runs a play contest limited to college and university students. The prize is $250, awarded quarterly, and for this modest sum the winner relinquishes all rights to his masterpiece for life.

NOW, as we take up television rights in their relation to the movies, the issues become somewhat more complex. For example, there's the young lady who had a novel published a while back. After several months in which no movie sale developed, she wrote a television adaptation for CBS. Along came Columbia Pictures and bought the book. At this point CBS owns the adaptation, while Columbia Pictures owns the book and has the right to present a television version of its own. However, since any adaptation Columbia might offer on TV would undoubtedly bear a close resemblance to the one belonging to CBS, CBS could claim plagiarism and, theoretically at least, sue for damages.

SITUATIONS of this sort, differing only in details, are not uncommon at present and have a lot to do with the hesitancy in certain quarters to play ball with television.

In the case of books or plays sold to pictures before television was a force to be reckoned with, further difficulties have emerged. Early this year the Lucky Strike Theatre presented "The Letter" on NBC. Aware that Warner Brothers had filmed the Maugham story in 1940, NBC spokesmen claimed that they had acquired live video rights from the author and that these were not covered in the picture company's contract for screen rights. Although Warners was believed at the time to be planning a legal test, no suit has been filed, and the question of whether live TV rights belong to the studios under contracts made before the rise of television is a question that remains to be settled.

IN current transactions pretty generally the studio obtains the right to exploit a property on television for promotional purposes. The companies also own television rights to the pictures themselves. In some instances an author may retain the right to use the character from his book on radio or television programs not employing the same plot as the book. While the film producers often attempt to hold up the author's radio-television rights for as long as seven to ten years, deals have been negotiated in which these rights are freed within two years after the release of a picture.

PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY

NEWS WHILE IT IS NEWS

HOUSEHOLD, Nelson A. Crawford, 912 Kansas Ave., Topeka, Kansas, was at press time rejecting mss. with a printed form stating it is "increasing interest on factual articles ...and not now buying either fiction or verse, and so must return your material."

The ROTARIAN, Ieland D. Case, 35 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago 1, Ill., rejects with a form that is individually addressed, lists every ms. it covers, and checked for one or more, of 12 reasons, why the mss. could not be used. Helpful for writers. Two of the reasons indicate that the magazine "seldom uses fiction or mss. over 2,000 words in length."

One of our students sent us a ms. wrapped in a copy of the Lincoln, Neb., STAR. Reading this out-of-town paper, as we do any one that falls into our hands, we came across a serial, "Black Ian Walks" by Florence Kerrigan, member of the WCS Family. It was distributed by AP NewsFeatures, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 20, which is listed as a "second serial rights" market for "novels of romance, adventure & mystery; American backgrounds & clean, fast-moving action. Length: 30,000 in chapters of 1,000 words each." Pays on Acc. Good market to keep in mind for published—books and magazine stuff.

An associate editor of The SONGWRITERS REVIEW decamped, apparently with all the physical assets he could lay his hands on. One complication is a resulting delay in the recording of a prize-winning song in a contest sponsored by the magazine. The SONGWRITER'S REVIEW is still being published, however. A tough break for Syde Berman, a courageous editor and a friend of songwriters.

The Songwriter's Annual Directory is soon to be issued (Oct. 15th) by The SONGWRITERS REVIEW, 1650 Broadway, NYC 19, $1.

HERE'S HOW, Wellington W. Brothers, 1512 Jarvis Ave., Chicago 26, Ill., which advertised rather widely in writers' magazines, is rather impersonal in its response to inquiries. Our letter to check on this market was returned clipped to a form letter containing a check list of ms. rejection comments that had been checked. No other comment, no 'thank you' or personal word.

This magazine stresses "self-improvement, and the profit angle. Its circulation is 80% men. Editorially, the word 'hobby' is almost taboo. It lays heavy emphasis on facts, and and photos. It wants: Success stories, Feature material (1,000 to 2,500 & pix), Fillers (cartoons with profit or business slant acceptable). Reports: 2 weeks; pays $3.00 & up; 10 after Acc. Photos with captions: $2.00 & up; cartoons, $10 and up. Premium rates if material is new, fresh, off the beaten path."

It sounds like a good market, but we prefer editors who work more personally.

PRINTERS' INK Directory of House Organs is to be re-issued in November at $5. It is revised at 3-year intervals, and is said to be the most complete compilation available. Every magazine is listed 3 ways: by name, firm and location.

This is a useful market list for writers. While many house organs are internally edited (staff written), a large number of other books are open markets for free lance mss.. A specific example is the B.S. & C. BEACON., Black, Sivell & Gruson, Ray Winningham, 720 Delaware, Kansas City, Mo. Ray is a member, incidentally, of the WCS Family. The magazine pays $10 for a one-page short story.

A member of the Associate Business Writers of America was favorably impressed with REWRITE. He subscribed. Now he has volunteered to be our Trade Paper Consultant and also to write an occasional 200-word piece about trade papers for us. That is how swell a lot of big name and successful writers in all branches are!

May we remind you that this issue went to press about 10 days early because Bill & Elva had to make their plans for attending the UNH Conference. It was Bill's 13th year. We hope to cover the Conference as fully as we can in the October issue.

In the August issue of POETRY there is an argument between the editor and a representative of a book publisher as to whether the editor was misquoted in a comment he made about a poet, which was later used as advertising by the publisher. It is rather "fulsome" praise and the publisher states it was an "unsolicited statement, the use of which for advertising and promotion purposes was later authorized by you."

This shows into what a position anyone is apt to be maneuvered by loose endorsements. Advertisers are almost certain to distort or misinterpret, at the very least "stretch" a statement. They offer you "valuable" publicity. But you want to be very sure you stand for what you hawk. Certainly not for vanity publishing or an incompetent writer. Wisest plan is never to lend your name. We don't.

In the Nelson fall catalogue we noticed a new book, "Stairway to the Sky", by Marguerite Dickson, longtime member of the WCS Family. She's the author of 4 other junior novels. It is especially interesting to writers because it is about Christine, who gets her short story and then first novel published. A good book for background reading.

We have received a number of inquiries about an agency in NYC, that charges a regular $20 annual fee, apparently even when it has begun to sell mss. for you. That is the equivalent of a 10% commission on a $200 story. We believe every agency must be judged, naturally, on its ability to deliver. This fee is a premium for service rendered. We do

not approve of such extra fees. The better, non advertising agents, who spend all their time selling, do not add such charges to the bill. They assume the risk and do not ask a writer to share it.

"DON'T YOU KNOW THERE IS A WAR ON?"

As I write this I have just finished asking by long distance why the August REWRITE which was promised for Thursday is still in the printer's shop on Monday. That is a tip-off on what's going to happen to all of the markets you write for—until this war business is settled one way. If the Soviets win, or the forces that are moving us ever nearer to government dictatorship to the individual here in this country, you might as well break your typewriter up for scrap. For the second time in ten years, editors have got to wrestle with priorities and shorthanded industrial plants, that make regular monthly, quarterly or what-have-you schedules a horrible nightmare. For the third time within a span of one lifetime, my generation is faced with the problems of having its life and opportunities for full and abundant living, cramped and distorted by war. Really, it's four times, for I was born practically in the Spanish-American War. "Tain't funny, McGee, no, it ain't at all!"

That's why every American has a very important date, at the voting-booth this fall, a a job all the time to make his voice heard. Writers above all have a stake, and a duty! If the peoples of the world would rise up & shout down the follies of their leaders, the waste and the greed of war, of politics and self-aggrandizement, there would be a small portion of security for the rest of us. You have read stories about the neighbors getting together to raise a home for a veteran, or a polio victim. If we could apply such a technique of constructive living to government at the upper levels, there would be no wars or national hatreds.

Writers have a great opportunity and duty to clarify the issues, to ridicule the humbug, to preach the goals of better living a world of men can easily reach, if they will each and all individually set their minds to it. This world can be a paradise, the adventure of real living can reach a peak of excitement and fun such as no man has yet realized, if only we will truly practice that Christian myth to which so many of us offer only lip service. (In past times readers of REWRITE have criticized our referring to Christianity as a "myth". But it's exactly that until we, and all other adherents to religious philosophies or beliefs, wake up, rise up and give them validity through realistic thinking and constructive action.)

I cannot help thinking as I read the Korean front-line despatches, that todays bumped tanks and planes represent tomorrow's civilian luxuries and necessities. In Korea, & every other dangerous "trouble spot" we are destroying the necessities, the simple joys and pleasures of Billy Gee and his playmates. And what — — —s our greedy leaders and those men of the politburo are to be willing to despoil a child's future! But so long as we do not lift our fingers, or as writers, our biting scorn and contempt for those who steal elections in Missouri, and other portions of our so-called democratic world, we are parties of the second part, accomplices in fact to such debauchery.

DO YOU PRODUCE ENOUGH?

Here's a comment we received a while ago. It speaks for itself.

"You wrote something to me for which I am most grateful. You said (when I was thinking about the possibility of an agent), "you are not producing enough." That hit me right between the eyes. And for that remark I bless you. It was just what I needed. Was I mad! Not at you, but at myself. For stalling the way I do. All the excuses I make for not doing any writing! I should really frame that remark, and, by Golly, I think I will do it, too. I go like a so-and-so, when I am challenged. So, again, thank you for your help."

No one has to produce like a pulp writer. A lot of them would be better writers, probably earn more of their just deserts, if in their wisdom they would slow down. But each and everyone of us has to produce copy. Not just once in a while, when the mood hits us and we feel like writing. But rather, all of the whole time. One of the surprising things I learned from reading Arnie Dyle's biography was that in this very sense he was not that kind of a newsman you read about in books or see in movies. He was a shy, sensitive "artist" who put so much of himself into every column, that even at the end he wasn't prolific. Sometimes he went for weeks not writing a column, then sitting down and grinding out a dozen in a few days. The pressure and strain of "the column" was always upon him. It was agony for him to start writing, after a vacation. So, the pains of authorship are just as bad for a man who gave 2½ years overseas to writing under the gruelling handicaps Ernie knew in the ETO, as they are for any of us, who can write under favorable conditions.

The comment that my good friend sent back to me, had to do with writing enough to get a commercial rating with an agent. You have got to be able to do at least a good "slick" short story every month or 6 weeks; or several magazine novels or serials every year. Or in the full length field, one or two novels a year. In the non-fiction field production can and probably should be even heavier. Many magazine articles, a raft of newspaper features, several books. It means doing a lot of writing, piling up the back-log that wore Ernie down so over the years.

A LITTLE LOGIC IS A "MUST"

Sometimes I think one of the biggest fundamentals we overlook in our education of a boy or girl, and certainly of our adults is a sense of logic. Sound thinking is a rarity today. You see this lack in the thoughts expressed by big businessmen and politicians and you see it in the writing and selling by writers. People who ought to know better, act and think in a dreamy eyed manner. No real connection is made between cause and effect or the likely consequence of a decision. It is a weakness that too many writers actively cultivate, to see only what they want to see.

When the Soviets signified their willingness to take their turn in presiding at the United Nations' General Assembly, a host of important big-wigs heaved a sigh of relief. It was a sign, they said, the Russians wanted to cooperate for a change. After Korea? After the rape of any one of the satellites or continued sabotage of the United Nations idea? Maybe they do wish to cooperate but on the basis of past performance, their word as a nation is not worth a plugged red cent. It is much more likely that they see an exceptional opportunity to create chaos and disorder in the ranks of their enemies.

A writer told me the other day that a novel he had written did not need revising because a lot of published novels he has read in the past few years have no form. Therefore, his ms. does not need form, and hence any rewriting. The question of the relative ability of himself and the published author of this novel or that to tell a story, failed to enter his head. When I analyzed, very carefully, his ms., I found that it was not only loosely written, but weakly written in no derogatory sense of the word.

Here are some of the defects I found. The main character and the problem were not apparent to the reader in the first 50 pages. The viewpoint was badly handled from a technical angle. Not only did the reader experience difficulty in knowing who was the MC, but the author went into the minds of a wide variety of characters so casually that confusion developed, as well as a lack of unity. The illusion of reality was destroyed & the reader was in the position of a person, who is introduced to several celebrities at the same moment, but given no clue which is which. An effect can be accomplished in the clean-cut manner of an expert; it can be done in a fumbling manner, or it can be botched.

One thing that it takes inexperienced and beginning writers a long time to perfect is the matter of scenes. Too many writers permit themselves just to slide into or out of a scene sloppily. Their scenes as a result, tend to be "fuzzy" instead of sharp, clean-cut. The transitions between them are wavering and dull. The author does not move with authority from one point to another.

Elva and I find that we talk a different, almost foreign language from many writers—because we talk in terms of thinking through the logic of the material and the presentation of the mss. We ask ourselves, "Is this soundly put together? Is it human, and emotionally moving?" But the author thinks of it in terms of absolutes. He had an idea; he's written it, so it must be "finished". It is a rare author who talks in terms of an idea that did not come off. At least, not before the old ms. has accumulated a number of rejections. And these always prove puzzling.

The logic of checking through to see what is wrong and why a ms. repeatedly returns is almost never indulged in by young authors. No standards of judgment are built up so that a logical case of cause and effect can be developed. Sometimes it comes as a "complete" surprise to an author that he has tried for example, to sell a 5,000 word ms. to a market that never buys anything over 2,000. Or to a market that uses no fiction. These are obvious rejection factors, but they are not exaggerated. There is a lack of logic in an assumption that a square ms. will fill that proverbial round hole.

More subtle, but no less a matter of logic is the matter of character reaction to a situation. Pick up any newspaper and you'll find at least one example of someone in the news doing something illogical. Or let's say they do not think through the consequences. When an inexperienced person commits crime, the police don't chase that person. On the contrary, they seek out the usual haunts of the criminal. Nine times out of ten he will show up in a matter of hours. Even experienced crooks give themselves away by some innocent little failure to think through all of the logical details. The police again, wait for the criminal to expose himself. People who depart from their routine rut of life invariably stand out from the conventional pattern. Persons who try to "bury" themselves, almost always leave a trail that an expert, i.e., a detective can pick up.

A writer would be very wise to get hold of a book on the subject of logic. The current craze for psychology and "psychiatrics", is only an attempt on the part of men and women to understand the emotional cause and effect of what goes on inside of them. In describing the methods of police, I have hinted at the real secret of logic. It is really only a matter of studying the problem and people involved, and then using commonsense. As I have repeatedly pointed out in REWRITE, if a writer really knows his characters & understands the complex interplay of their human relations, he will have no trouble plotting a story about them. If you know the traits, background, etc., of a character thoroughly you can generally predict or render plausible what he will do under given circumstances or in a specific situation. What is natural is usually on the way to being logical. Try testing your stories in this way.

A NON-PAYING MARKET THAT PAID OFF

Here is an interesting bit of writing history that proves the old theme about casting one's bread upon the waters. It's from a member of the WCS Family, Rebecca Phillips.

"A long time ago, I became interested in a chapter in regional American life, the heroic come-back the farm people of South Dakota were making after the dustbowl disaster. There seemed to be a first hand, homey story of these people in the Dakota FARMER, so I subscribed for it. I became so interested in the women on the farms, many of them living in isolated regions, I began writing for them about our trees and fruit and flowers, down here in the South (Rebecca lives in Alabama. Ed.) No pay, of course, and the editor said it was doubtful if there'd ever be any pay.

"But they all came out of the slump, & the magazine, too, prospered and was able to pay. Because I had 'donated' so many articles and pictures, they began to pay me for my contributions several years ago. Many of the subscribers wrote to me. In fact, my serial (a copy of this story now running, accompanied the letter. Ed.) is the result of many letters over a period of years of one particular reader, who liked what I wrote. The women's editor has been publishing some generous comments about the serial and the appeal it had for various readers. As you can see, there is no attempt at fine writing. Simply the story of one woman's life as a pioneer, out there." (Done in biographical form.)

That shows how one writer has had an adventure in living, and at the same time made a real contribution to American life. It is a method we can all apply with variations, to our own lives and writing. It re-emphasizes the old truth, that no experience is entirely lost for a writer.

SOME NEWS AND VIEWS ALONG THE WAY

The National Writers' Club, Denver, Colo., has just issued for its members a report on the state of the radio & television markets. Because REWRITE & WCS work closely with NWC and share the same motives, the best interests of writers everywhere, we received for reading a copy. It is a very able report, & quite incidentally supports REWRITE'S statement in the July issue, that the chances of an inexperienced free lance writer breaking in are almost nil. In the report this theory is backed, however, by the testimony and experience of a number of experts from various departments of the field.

NOT Recommended. STOMYETTE Magazine, published by a West Coast Firm, is a subscriber-written publication that is trying to increase circulation by a variation of the illegal chain-letter trick. You have to "subscribe" and distribute 10 other subscription blanks. If all of these "friends" subscribe and keep the chain from breaking by passing out blanks, you might get a sizable "prize" dividend. I repeat: The scheme is illegal & will eventually be barred from the mails inevitably. But the point is: are you a writer or a money-gambler? And it is well to remember that (1) magazines that require your subscription before they will publish a ms. usually take a long time to get around a complete circle; and (2) almost no one reads a magazine of this kind, except the interested parties. (And the latter are only interested in seeing one of their stories show.)

National Fine Arts Awards, which required a registration fee for entry, has delayed its closing date to December 31, 1950. It alleges that prize money is in the bank and two of the contests could be cleaned up now But for the sake of publicity, these are being held until the rest are ready. That argument is susceptible of being "argued" both ways.

LITERARY MARKET PLACE, 1950 Edition. Ed. Anne J. Richter. R.R.Bowker Co., 62 W. 45th St., NYC 19, $3.50. Now in its 11th edition, this is the directory of American book publishing that all of us in the literary business use every working day. It lists: book & magazine publishers, reviewers, columnist contacts, manufacturers, publicity, printing firms, etc., etc. It is not complete in the fullest sense of the word. But it is a mine of information and the firms listed, especially in the case of agents, are for the most part reputable and reliable. (It is extremely interesting to note that the majority of advertising "critic-agents" and vanity publishers remain unmentioned in this valuable compendium year after year. Legitimate editorial workers are listed.)

UNITED MUSIC CLUB, Box 808, Pittsburgh 30, is now offering its members a low cost commercial record plan. It started Aug. 1. Admittedly it is a gamble, and only one songwriter a month will benefit. But we believe this outfit has succeeded over the years in becoming one of the very few real opportunities for the free lance to get his work before the public.

Christmas & Greeting Cards. From time to time we are glad to tell our readers—about members of the WCS Family (particularly the handicapped and shut-in members) who have a hobby or sideline method of financing their writing. We are firm believers in the cooperative way of life, and the Yankee idea of one writer helping another whenever he can. So, without endorsing the products, we mention simply some friend, and let other members of our WCS Family do any business they can. Under this heading: Virginia Stewart, Rt. 2, Ashland, Wis., is selling greeting cards and wrapping paper. Under severe adversities she's placed 38 mss. in the past year-and-a-half. She's done a good job and we're all for her and the other handicapped and shut-in or just plain humanly beset members of our Gang.

YEA, VERILY, "STUDY YOUR MARKET!"

Here is an editor's comment about a story that was submitted to him (a juvenile). It offers a considerable lesson in plotting:

"Study your market. A good story, but think of your market; think of the readers. Most Sunday School children are little folks and have both parents. If one has a parent dead and the other remarries (that was the plot. ed.), it is a comparatively rare problem among SS children. But whether or not, we do not want to cross the bridge for the readers before it comes. Imagine for yourself: what thoughts will a story like this one raise in the minds of readers? A child will think, 'Oh, horrors! What if mother dies, and my dad remarries again! I'll fight back against a stepmother all the time. I'll never desert my loyalty to my Mommie.'

"And if a child does NOT react that way it is just possible she might swing clear over (with Sylvia) and feel, 'Well, if mother dies it will be OK. Dad will marry again, and we will have a happy family circle.'

"See what I mean! Why 'drag in' a situation that does more harm than good. Now, if you'd made the new member of the family another girl, a DP, for instance, and traced the struggle and the adjustment, then that would be a wonderful story. And you could tie it in, with the sermon, as you did. (We have a DP girl, in our house, age 21. Our girls are 6, 8, 10, so it is no problem at all, but I sometimes imagine it might be."

For reasons that are fairly obvious, I am preserving the editor's anonymity. But that discussion offers some very interesting overtones. It shows how carefully you have to consider all the angles of a situation. And it demonstrates also how professional writers and editors take a situation apart, analyze all the implications, and often come up with an entirely different story idea. That is another reason why I have not disclosed, publicly, the personalities involved in this little anecdote. I want the original author to have first whack at the story the editor suggested, if he so desires. (Incidentally, the author confided to me that he sold this story, as originally written, to another editor.)

A further angle to this discussion is the thought that rose in my mind as I read over the editor's comment the first time. Seems to me it points up the borderline between a story that is for children, and one that is about children for adults. Frequently, such a line is tenuous: a story that starts with one purpose in mind, goes serious. Or it becomes obviously ill-suited to one medium, & so the author abruptly changes his purpose. He deliberately writes it in a more superficial and less controversial manner. In any case, he does what the editor urged be done in this instance: he thinks of his readers.

SET UP AN MC & SITUATION CLEARLY

Here is another facet to the same problem. It is quite important to sell the right ms. to the right editor at the right time, but, I may add, it is also important also to offer as tangible and practical a ms. as possible to the reader. When he gets through a reading, he should know very clearly what it is all about and how the author feels, even though the author never intrudes, nor editorializes his personal feelings. There are stories, like the famous one, "The Lady and the Tiger", or any good problem story where the author deliberately avoids resolving an issue too decisively, that will keep a reader thinking about the basic issues for days upon end.

But always the underlying issues, the overtones of meaning, should be clear. If the reader starts asking questions, you know in your heart that the story has failed to accomplish what it set out to do. Elva and I read a story last night in which a girl has to decide whether she is going to live on a farm or not. Her husband has gone to war, & so, the decision the girl makes is really a decision of loyalty or lack of it to a man. Does she love the husband or the other man?

Early in the story the girl leaves, walks out on the loneliness of living alone. But there is a scene in which the husband is at home and discusses the issue with his wife. Now obviously, it makes a difference whether the girl walks out before or after he is called to the colors. In one case the two of them face the issue together; in the other, on the contrary, the wife faces it alone and behind the husband's back. It makes a difference, and it was not clear. Elva & I as we read aloud, both "backtracked" with a question. The story thus failed in its effect.

Another kind of clarity is the matter of a cleanout opening. I read an article; it had a universal problem: that of a woman making an adjustment to be congenial to her mate's life and whims. It was intended to be funny as the dickens. But the author opened with a semi-fictional style. Neither the universal problem nor the humorous treatment was very clearly spelled out for the reader. Both of these elements was latently present, but it was up to the reader to dig them out. It is funny, but readers do not like to do that.

You never can be too careful in spelling, not literally, but so that the reader "adds up" without difficulty just what the piece, be it fiction or non-fiction, is about, and what it signifies. Elva read this article & got to the heart of the matter at once. She remarked: "I have read a lot of articles in women's magazines telling women how to make a success of their marriages, but never one advising the men how to adjust. What an article like this one does, is to show a girl reacting ironically and satirically to this very human situation." That was the "story".

PROS AND CONS OF ROUND ROBINS

I have been asked to comment about "Round Robins". We at WCS House are great believers in any cooperative project in which a group of writers work together to help each other write and sell. A round robin is a workshop conducted by mail, in which the various members sit down and talk over their problems. They do it by mail instead of gathering the whole group around a table. We know of several round robins within or overlapping the WCS Family. We know of a number of writers, who correspond with other writers. We have put quite a few writers in contact, so that they could talk over their problems and inspire each other with better morale.

Round robins can vary as much as individuals. Each can have a different purpose. One that we know of is built around a letter by each member, who puts in his contribution as the postman delivers the big envelop at his door. He of course removes his last letter, and he may enclose some article he has read during the intervening time. A working robin we know about also includes mss. Members analyze these and comment, suggest markets, do everything they can to help their fellow members to solve technical and selling difficulties. Questions are often raised and a writer cannot help being stimulated by seeing the different responses of half-a-dozen varying minds to the same problem.

Any robin is helped by having one member, who serves as unofficial or executive leader. This chairman takes it upon himself, or herself, to guide the rest. He sees that no one delays the envelop unduly; keeps everyone from indulging too much in personalities and generally keeps the tone constructive. A group is always the sum of what each writer puts into the common pool. It is very easy, naturally, to coast and let the other fellow do most of the work. Each member, therefore, should check his own contribution before sealing and mailing the envelop. "Have I really given of myself, and put something positive and creative into the envelop this time?" he should ask himself.

It is possible for cumulative dividends to arise as a group sticks together for a long period of time. Not only do the members begin to see how they can help each other but they tend to become better critics of themselves and each other's work. I have related before in REWRITE how Prof. G. P. Baker, of the old 47 Workshop at Harvard asked the invited audience to offer written comments, after it has witnessed a production. It was made up of brilliant professors, wives, and just old Cambridge neighbors, etc., etc. At first the comments were ingenuous, more regarding the scenery and costumes than the play. But at the end of ten years Professor Baker had forged a remarkable instrument. A playwright could get a real insight on what success he had had in putting his ideas over. The audience has become a very sensitive and discriminating one. It knew a good deal about practical playwriting. It could pull a play apart and tell in specific language why the effect did not project itself. This group of about 800 or 1,000 men and women was a professional asset of the first water, and also probably the best audience in America at the time. Continued practice at its job, a voluntary one, had raised its standards and improved its technical skill notably. The same thing is possible in any round robin if the members really desire it.

A round robin is a great discipline for a writer because it teaches him to get on with people. He has to subvene his personality & emotions to the welfare of others. If your robin breaks up or does not seem to be getting good results, look within yourself, try to find out what's wrong and why. Often you can accomplish more by suggesting ideas and letting the seed get planted in the others' minds, to grow up and blossom. Of course if you can all be objective and not let an emotional crisis develop every other trip, you get more done without stepping on someone's toes. If the members all learn something in that direction, so that they know just what they can expect from one another, the robin will not have been created in vain.

Finally, it is a fact that a group always can get more done than any one individual. A group can buy more books, collect more market information and have a larger body of information. I know one robin group that plans a poetry market list of its own. We here at WCS are standing by to aid in this project. All of us will benefit by working together. The process of digging for markets is a laborious and discouraging one. But when several writers work together along common interests, they can lessen much of the drudgery for each. I know that I constantly keep my eyes open for tips that will benefit certain of our students, whose special requirements are known to me. And without the help of a number of our subscribers, who continually send us important tips, we couldn't do as good a job in supplying you topical news of the changing markets.

A round robin can be a lot of fun. Whether you live in a small, isolated community, and so depend on the robin for the stimulation of talking shop with other scattered & also remotely placed writers, or whether you do a bang up job of helping to run a critical analysis of the group's mss., a robin is a morale booster. But don't forget, it will help you to the extent that you help it. Be a booster and pull your share of the weight.

A RADIO FILLER MARKET

Station WCCO, Friendly Fred, (and KDAL., Duluth, Minn., pay $1 for each toast. None returned, so postcard may be used. Acceptances paid within a month. KDAL uses transcripts of WCCO programs, but different mss. for toasts. 5 days a week. Nita G. Peters.

THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

PRIMER OF THE NOVEL. Vincent McHugh. Random House. $2.50. This is a charmingly written, yet very practical book. The title is deceptive because while it deals with the novel, the wisdom and experience gathered in it is applicable to all writers and their technical and physical problems. All kinds of specific subjects, such as the right paper, editors, agents, "duration series", angles of narration, etc., are taken up, and handled, often briefly but effectively. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

BOYS' LIFE ADVENTURE STORIES. Ed. by Irving Crump. Thomas Nelson & Sons. $2.00. An anthology of selected stories (16) from BOYS' LIFE, the Boy Scout magazine. It is a model of this magazine's requirements since it is edited by the editor himself. One story incidentally, is authored by Laurie York Erskine, friend of Bill and a co-founder, with Billy Gee's "Uncle" Bob Shaw, of Solebury, an unusually fine school in Pennsylvania.

AMERICAN GIRL FAVORITE STORIES. Ed. Marjorie Vetter & Ruth Baker Bowman. Thomas Nelson & Sons. $2.50. A companion book to the preceding title. Again, edited by an editor. It includes 21 selected stories and may easily be used as a model in studying the magazine.

WRITING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Mabel Louise Robinson. Thomas Nelson & Sons. $2.75. When we went to press this book was being rushed to us at the UNH Conference (publication date, Aug. 16, review copies not available to us, as of Aug. 10. A sample of how close a publisher often has to work these days!) This book, however, is a remarkable one that has long been out of print. We understand it is revised. The author is a writer of stories, and also an able teacher at Columbia. For these reasons, a WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

BOOKS OF PERMANENT WORTH

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. Herschel Brickell. $3.00. The UNH Conference Handbook. A good book that covers a lot of ground. Bill Harris has two chapters in it on the Short Story and Agents.

THE WRITERS' BOOK. Ed. Helen Hull. $4.00. A handbook by 40 members of the Authors' League covering a wide variety of subjects. Practical know how and intimate experiences. We found it very interesting and valuable.

STORY WRITING. Edith Mirrielees. $3.00. One of the all-time great books by a great personality and fine teacher.

THE CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers. $5.50. A practical, hard hitting book. The technique of writing and also of being a writer.

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A WORD ABOUT OUR SERVICES

The purpose of the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB is to bring books to writers at a saving, and also to finance REWRITE and the CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE. (REWRITE accepts no advertising so it can be your impartial buying guide on all services and products offered to writers. It has saved countless writers a very considerable fortune by advising them on what books are best for them, and what agents, critics, correspondence schools and the like are bad security risks. As a non-advertising advisory and writers' counsel service, our one interest consists in seeing that you make the most of your skills and materials.

The WRITERS' BOOK CLUB gives you a "Dividend" (the book of your choice) for every 6 books you buy. This amounts to a saving approximating 10% on your investment.

The WCS Circulating Library ($2 per year, plus postage both ways) enables you to read all the best books on writing. Many writers save themselves additional money by reading the books they are undecided on in the Circulating Library before they buy them. The number is not limited.

The WCS Scholarship Fund offers help, encouragement and advice to handicapped & shut-in writers at no cost. The Fund, limited only by the extent of the gifts it receives, is a revolving fund. Many of those who have received help in the past, are sharing in the opportunity of helping the worse off than they themselves by repaying some of the help extended to them.

The WCS Family is made up of all of those writers and others who are in contact with us. Some use this friendly bond more than others but all find it an invigorating, inspiring, and very practical means of working together. Several Round Robins and many personal, or professional friendships have resulted. A great many market tips are exchanged by the WCS Minute Men, who help us to build up the CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE at WCS House.

"CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE" (individual envelops covering nearly 2,000 separate publishing markets, sources of material, agents or critics and a world of other useful material) is constantly being expanded by our research, your helpful contributions of rejection slips and editorial letters, comments, etc., as well as all the information papers we read. A constant stream of data flows to correspondents all over the world. Undoubtedly the most valuable personalized and individual market service that any writers' magazine offers to its subscribers.

COMBAT FORCES JOURNAL. Combat Forces Press, Col. Joseph I. Greene, 1115 17th St., N.W., Washington 6, D.C., is the new title of the Infantry Journal and its press. It plans a larger schedule of new books, "The Effects of Atomic Weapons" being the first.